

Beneath the LEGO Phanta Sea

Executive Summary

Through the darkness, you see the familiar shapes of red LEGO bricks rotating in front of you. You steel yourself for adventure as you fly over them and hurtle through space. Suddenly the earth heaves into view. A space shuttle drifts by and the payload bay doors open to reveal the LEGO astronauts on board. They're friendly sorts; they toss you a wave.

Below, you see LEGO Island as the planet slowly turns. You continue to plummet toward the planet. Boats sail placidly on the ocean. Dolphins leap from the water. With a deafening noise, you splash into the sea. You are surrounded by a shroud of bubbles. As the view clears, you start to pick out shapes from the shadows. A manta ray undulates up and over you as you descend. A shark sneaks out of the murk and gives you a sniff. With a thud, you hit bottom. A treasure chest jammed with jewels and gold is glinting in the filtered sunlight.

You want to grab it, but you start drifting back up. The title screen fades up and out, and for a moment, you remember: it's just a game...

An octopus swims past as you ascend. Finally reaching the surface again, you gasp as you break into air. Breathing heavily and bobbing on the waves, you spy a platform in the distance. A tiny figure in the mist is calling to you with a bull-horn.

"Ahoy! Over Here, mate!...Swim over here. Grab hold of a dolphin...he'll help you...Watch out for the sharks!"

You see a shark circling and decide to head toward the platform -- with alacrity. The shark however, has other plans. He circles back in front of you. Fumbling in the water (and still trying to figure out how the mouse works) you manage to run right into the shark. With a terrifying gulp, he swallows you whole.

It's dark inside, but you can still make out the discouraging outlines of a shark's rib cage. At the far end of this cavern lie the glistening teeth of the monster. Suddenly the jaws part and you are spit out back into the ocean, bruised but alive -- and a lot farther away from the platform.

No time to contemplate your predicament -- a sawtooth shark zig-zags toward you and knocks you further away. You start to lose hope when you see another fin breaking the water and bearing down on you. Girding for the

worst, you rejoice when you see the sleek outlines of a porpoise arcing out of the water. You swim toward the porpoise and grab on as he races for the platform.

As you approach the platform, you are greeted by Captain Bricksworthy. He directs you to use the ladder, and you do. As you board the platform, you see someone lift a hatch, look both ways and tip-toe behind the Captain into the elevator.

Oblivious to the intruder, the Captain welcomes you aboard. "Step right in, mate! You sure know how to make a splashy entrance!" You follow him into the elevator and go down to the captain's station. The Captain invites you register in the log book, and tells you about the station.

"If it's adventure you crave, you fell into the right ocean! There's a whole world to explore down here, but I'll tell you right off -- it can be dangerous too. No place for amateurs." Looking you right in the eye, he says "But I can see right off that you've been around, mate."

The Captain points to the map on the wall. "That'll give you an idea of the layout. We're studying a sunken ship called The Brickster's Revenge, and over here are the ruins of an ancient city. Of course a young spirit like you might like to rip around the mazes in the Shark Caves, I wager. Just don't get eaten. The sharks are already overweight, and we're not insured for strangers who drop out of the sky."

Pointing to a door, Captain Bricksworthy says "Well, get your bricks clicking! The sub factory is right over there! Why don't you make a sub-runner and check out the Phanta Sea!"

You head through the door and find a huge inventory of submarine bricks floating in a tank. You pick a design from a design book and a wire-frame hologram of the starting piece glows on the construction bay. You locate the corresponding part from the floating tank and drag it into place. As you build the sub-runner of your choice, you customize the colors and decals.

With your tricked-up sub, you head out to explore the Phanta Sea. You remember that the Shark Caves are off to the west on your left. You check your compass and head off into the consuming blue of the ocean.

Soon you see the looming shape of the Shark Caves. You glide into the cave entrance. You consult the map on your dash, which has a flashing blue light to indicate your position. Suddenly your shark-finder starts beeping. On the map, you can see a red light closing in on your position. A shark! Time for quick action! You crank it to the left and enter a new cave. The

shark is on your tail! You pull it to the right and finally shake the shark. But where in brickdom are you? Time to consult the chart.

By looking at the map, you determine that, basically, you're lost. Now you need to think. How do you get out of this maze?

You start to plot a path out when the shark-finder interrupts your thoughts. Not another shark! Evasive maneuver! You blast off in any direction, just to escape the shark.

You lose the shark again, but now you need to find a new path -- or double back, past the shark. Looking at the map, you notice that there is a green light coming toward you. Now what! But instead of another shark, you see a porpoise swim by. On a whim, you follow the porpoise, but lose him a few turns later.

You start to get the hang of things. By avoiding sharks and following porpoises, you get some help with the maze. Before too long, you see sunlight at the end of the tunnel and emerge from the shark caves. A trio of divers are floating at the entrance, and they hold up cards with your score: 8, 6, 7. Good grief, what do you have to do to get a ten? Oh well, next time you'll do better. You're happy to see anyone again, even if they are bad judges.

Next, you set course for the ruins. What secrets are lying covered in the sand? Thoughts of the ancient civilization that used to work and play there fill your head.

As the ruins appear in your window, a computer display shows up on your dash. It seems to be a map of the excavation, and you match the chart to the rotting walls that appear before you. You see a glint to your left, and you turn hard to port to take a closer look. There, half-buried in the sand is a tiny box. With the sub's robot arms, you grab the box and bring it into the hatch. A camera in the hatch shows your inventory. You now have one box on board.

You explore the ruins further and discover more treasure in the recently shifted sand. You grab it aboard and then decide to take off to the science station. They just might be interested in what you found.

On your way, you spot another sub-runner plucking seaweed. It looks like the same character you saw sneaking past Captain Bricksworthy. You're a little suspicious, but you want to help, so you decide to collect some seaweed too. You put it in the hatch along with your other treasures of the day.

You wave your robot arm at the other sub, and it waves back. Well, he seems to be friendly. You decide to continue toward the science station. Unfortunately, your compass starts to behave erratically. It spins uncontrollably, clockwise and counter. You're about to swim over to the other sub to ask for help, when it disappears. Bad timing.

Fortunately, your compass settles down, and you take a southeasterly course to what you hope will be the science center.

You see the center forming out of the blue, and breathe a sigh of relief. Now maybe you can get some answers. You pull alongside the science center and park your sub. You open the airlock hatch and walk in.

You see computers, lab tables and equipment everywhere. The head scientist, Dr. Harry Berry, comes forward to greet you. "Yo! Captain Bricksworthy told us you'd be here! What do you have for us? What do you have? Let's look! Can I see?" Dr. Berry rubs his claws together and walks over to a port where a robot arm is moving things from your sub to an inside hatch. You hear the sound of gas filling the hold, then the hatch opens up to reveal the contents.

"Hey, what's this! Seaweed! Don't pick the seaweed unless you're gonna eat it! Gonna mess up the system, that's what! I just planted that to replace the stuff that keeps disappearing. Are you the one who's taking it? Bad science, that! Don't want to rip it up -- want to study it. Study it!"

Another scientist comes over. "Hi, I'm Dr. Two. Don't mind Harry, here. He's a bit excitable. Someone's been mowing down his seaweed. We'll get to the root of it.

"Around here, we're interested in how everything fits together. You look pretty smart. You probably know all about ecosystems. If you want to know more, check out the displays around here. There are a lot of amazing creatures under the sea. And you can find out all about the food chain. If you're not careful, you could end up at the bottom of that chain -- not a desirable situation!"

Back at the hatch, Dr. Two is looking at your specimens. "Say, what's that?" Dr. Two lifts the small box out of the hatch and admires it. "What do you suppose is inside?"

He pries open the box to expose a set of tiny, golden objects. They look strangely familiar -- like a set of miniature tuning forks. Dr. Two slaps his head and exclaims "That's it! I think I know what these do!"

"What? What do they do?" wails Dr. Berry. But Dr. Two is too busy puttering to respond. After a few minutes, he turns around. He pushes a

button on a tape deck and the sound of porpoises fills the air. Then, with a flourish, he inserts one of the gold tuning forks into a circuit board. Wires coming out of the board connect to a computer display. As the porpoise squeals, the display goes wild.

"Just as I suspected! These gold forks are tuned to the frequency of porpoise sounds!" Pointing at you, he says, "And this newcomer seems to have found the secret of the ruins! In a couple of hours, I'll have all these forks wired up, and we can see just how smart that ancient civilization was! Our research indicates that they may have been able to communicate with sea creatures."

You're happy that you could help, but your reverie is interrupted by a warning blast from the lab speakers. "There's a trapped diver in the Abysmal trench. All hands alert. Trapped diver in the Abysmal trench!"

Dr. Berry turns to you and pleads "Can you go? I've seen you ride a sub and you're good. Not as good as me, really, but good. Not as good as Dr. Two either, but good, I suppose. Anyway, could you go help? Huh? Could you?"

You decide that today's a good day to be a hero and you head off to the airlock and enter your sub-runner. Consulting the map, you aim for the Abysmal trench. As you near the edge of the trench, you hold your breath. It's a long way down there. You inch closer, take a deep breath, and start to descend. An octopus squirts by as the cliff rises over you. Soon you see the diver huddling in a cave, while a great white shark circles hungrily back and forth. With the robot arm, you get the tranquilizer gun out of the hold. You take aim and fire.

Missed! You have lots of darts, though and you take aim again. You shoot, and hit! The shark slumps and turns upside down. A shark cage is lowered from the edge of the trench and you use your robot arm to move the shark into the cage. When you do, the cage slams shut and is pulled up and away. The diver, greatly relieved, waves and grabs on to the robot arm. Slowly, you ascend from the depths of the trench.

At the rim of the trench, a sub is waiting to take the diver back to a decompression chamber. You decide to head back to the science center to check on Dr. Two's progress. Along the way you see the sub you saw earlier, picking seaweed again. You watch and wonder, as the water around you starts to turn red. For some reason, your compass starts swinging around again. You back away and the needle stops gyrating, much to your relief.

You return to the science center and find Dr. Two testing his new device. He asks you to help him and you come over to his lab table. He is playing porpoise and shark sounds. "I recorded these noises last week around that oil spill. There was a lot of yakking going on."

Dr. Two asks you to twiddle the knobs on his contraption. As you do, you hear sounds that are almost like English, but garbled and higher pitched. By tweaking them, you make the sound more and more human. Finally you get something like speech "Haven't I such seen oily a since mess Pizza that hit boat rocks the!" You flip another switch and the words are unraveled: "I haven't seen such a oily mess since that Pizza boat hit the rocks!"

Dr. Two jumps up triumphantly. "We've done it! We made a fish translator! This is history in the making! Think of the research we can do with this! Think of the grant money!"

Just then another voice comes through the translator. "I'm over here!" You look through a port hole to see a porpoise bobbing outside.

"The fish translator is picking up sounds from outside! I wonder if it can pick up sharks as well" says the ebullient Dr. Two.

"Actually," replies the porpoise, "We're not fish, we're mammals. And we're kind of insulted to be lumped in with the sharks. Even an octopus has more brains than a shark."

"Of course, of course!" shouts Dr. Berry. "We know that! At least I know that! Dr. Two is an electronics expert – he may not know that. But I know that!"

Suddenly a hatch opens and the strange character who was harvesting seaweed runs into the room. He grabs the translator, and runs right back out again. Everyone is stunned. "Who was that? Who was that?" Cries Dr. Berry.

Dr. Two is furious. "That scoundrel was the Brickster! I thought we got rid of that miserable curmudgeon. He has to be stopped. *He's* the idiot who is ruining the seaweed beds! He's a vegicidal maniac!"

You don't have much time to contemplate this bad turn of events. There is a jolt that shakes the entire science station. From the port window, you see a shark attacking the support struts. The station can't possibly take much more of that.

"It's the Brickster! He must be using the fish translator to turn the sharks against us!" Dr. Two points at you. "We have to protect our equipment! Can you stop the Brickster?"

Why not, you think, and you take off after that social misfit. He leads you on a twisting chase. At one point, he stops and talks into the translator. Almost instantly, a crowd of sharks gather. They set their powerful jaws to work and chew the rudder off of your sub. Out of control, you spiral down to the seabed. You thump down on the bottom and take a little time to evaluate your position. You open the hatch and swim outside in your wetsuit. You grab the engine unit off the sub and break it down into a portable propulsion unit. Firing it up, you take off again after the Brickster.

You speed off in the direction of the wild man and see a strange sight. The Brickster is shouting into the translator, while a group of porpoises is pulling bricks out of his submarine. For some reason, he can't seem to control them. Soon, the Brickster is forced to abandon his sub, and like you, he grabs the propulsion unit and takes off.

You start to close in on him, but he talks into the translator again, and more sharks show up. With the porpoises protecting you, you tranquilize as many sharks as you can. The porpoises herd the numb fish into shark cages and slam the gates shut. You feel victorious, but then you notice that the Brickster has taken advantage of your troubles to escape. You head off toward his last location, but without a lot of confidence. The compass on your wrist starts spinning again and you formulate a theory: The Brickster must be messing up the magnetic fields. That means he must be near. You keep heading forward and see a dim outline of his form.

You catch up to him only to see that he has you right in his sights. He fires a tranquilizer dart at you and you stop dead in the water. For the next ten seconds, you are paralyzed as you watch the Brickster direct his gang of sharks to deconstruct the Science Center. When you can move again, you shoot a dart at the Brickster. You score! The Brickster begins to float, and the porpoises gather around him and slap him into a shark cage. You've got him!

A couple of divers from the Science Center come out and take the caged Brickster away. He wakes up in time to shake his claws at you. He is pulled up out of the water by a trawler, and you fondly hope that's the end of him. Out of the blue, a porpoise comes up and nuzzles you. In his mouth is the translator.

You take the translator back to the science center, where Dr. Two is waiting. "Wow! It looks like the translator worked a little too well! We better be careful about whose claws this thing lands in!"

"I think a little celebration is called for! This young stranger has saved our station! Hip hip hooray!"

From the translator, you hear the voice of a porpoise "I hope you hauled that nut-case a long distance away. The sharks are still riled up, and it'll take days to put them back in their place. But it looks like your new team member knows his stuff. We second the hoorays." Through the port hole, you see the porpoises bobbing up and down in unison. "Hip hip hooray!"

You've done a great job of saving the station, but there's still a funny feeling in the pit of your stomach. The Brickster has a way of crashing the party. But for now, you enjoy your moment in the spotlight. You know that you'll be back – after all, you need to improve your score at the Shark Caves. And there's lots more to discover.

In the distance you hear your mother calling. Dinner already? Well, after battling sharks and bad guys, you *do* have quite an appetite. After dessert, you can strap on your face mask and go again. You can practically smell the salt water. Oh yeah, you'll be back...